

## House Republican Press Release

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### **Rep. Powers: Emergency Response to CT Energy Crisis Needed**



Citing record-high gasoline prices brought on by widespread devastation from Hurricane Katrina and the rising world-wide demand for petroleum products, Deputy House Minority Leader Claudia “Dolly” Powers, R-151st District, today called for quick action by the state legislature to prevent price gouging at the retail level and to provide badly needed relief to Connecticut residents.

“Gasoline prices went over \$3 a gallon this week and could go even higher in the weeks ahead if we do not act promptly to head off what could be a serious threat to our state’s economy and to the well-being of our people,” Representative Powers said. “Immediate suspension of the state gasoline tax, which would result in a 38 cents per gallon saving to motorists, would be one important action we could take to reduce prices significantly at the pump. We also should suspend the mandate for the special gasoline formulations the state has placed on refineries, which would mean quicker deliveries of gasoline to Connecticut and sufficient supplies of gasoline for our citizens. The zone pricing system, which means people pay different prices for gasoline depending on where they live, also should be suspended.”

Representative Powers attended a briefing Friday afternoon with energy experts from the oil industry, gasoline retailers, Department of Environmental Protection officials and utility company representatives to get the most up to date information available on conditions in the Connecticut marketplace.

“It was my understanding, based on information derived from the investigation by the State Attorney General’s Office and the Department of Consumer Protection, that price gouging at the retail level does not appear to be a factor in the higher prices we are paying for gasoline,” Representative Powers said. “Rather, it appears that retailers are simply passing on the higher prices they are paying for gasoline that have been added on by wholesalers, the oil industry, and commodity traders.”

“We must be vigilant in our efforts to root out and punish price gouging at the pump if it occurs in Connecticut. Gasoline prices are already too high and artificially inflated prices for gasoline could threaten Connecticut’s economic recovery and even bring on a new recession if we do not act quickly and resolutely,” Representative Powers said. “I also

would strongly encourage the federal government to do its part and investigate the oil companies to determine whether they are awash in windfall profits.”

“We were advised at today’s meeting that the supply and price situation should stabilize after the long Labor Day weekend. If that projection pans out, it is certainly welcome news. In the meanwhile, I will continue to closely monitor the situation and work for whatever legislative relief we can provide to the people of Connecticut,” Representative Powers said.